Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TAIPEI 06919 01 OF 02 230829Z

10
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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---------- 097059
R 230746Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7433
INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO BY POUCH
USLO PEKING BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TAIPEI 6919

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SOPN, TW, US, CH
SUBJECT: THE GROC'S "CONDITIONING PROCESS"

REF: A. TAIPEI 6286
B. TAIPEI 6136
C. TAIPEI 6471
D. TAIPEI A-194 DATED SEPTEMBER 19, 1975

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: IN VARIOUS MESSAGES EMBASSY HAS REFERRED TO THE "CONDITIONING PROCESS" -- AND EFFORT ON THE GROC'S PART TO LEAD THE PUBLIC TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH TAIWAN'S UNCERTAIN FUTURE. THIS MESSAGE DESCRIBES SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT FACETS OF THE CONDITIONING PROCESS AND BRIEFLY EVALUATES ITS EFFECT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CONDITIONING PROCESS IS AN ATTEMPT BY THE GROC TO LEAD THE POPULACE OF TAIWAN TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH THE
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PAGE 02 TAIPEI 06919 01 OF 02 230829Z

ISLAND'S UNCERTAIN FUTURE, AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE POSSIBLE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

CONSEQUENCES OF DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION BY THE U.S. OF THE PRC. AS ITS NAME IMPLIES, IT REFERS TO A SERIES OF RELATED ACTIONS, NOT TO A SINGLE ACT, AND SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS A FULLY COORDINATED PLAN OF ACTION. RATHER, IT IS AN INTER-WEAVING OF STATEMENTS BY GROC OFFICIALS, AND OF NEWS ITEMS, EDITORIALS, AND COMMENTARY IN THE PRESS -- MUCH OF WHICH IS PROBABLY PROMPTED BY THE PRESS ITSELF ALTHOUGH UNDOUBTEDLY HAVING THE GROC'S IMPRIMATUR. IT IS MULTI-FACETED, ALTHOUGH THE THEMES OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE PREDOMINATE; AND BY ITS VERY NATURE IT IS FLEXIBLE, PROVIDING FOR CHANGE IN EMPHASIS AS APPROPRIATE TO THE CURRENT SITUATION.

3. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THEMES OF THE CONDITIONING PROCESS IS SELF-RELIANCE, BOTH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, STABILITY AND PROGRESS HERE ARE EMPHASIZED AS EVIDENCE OF THIS SELF-RELIANCE, ESPECIALLY IN COMPARISON WITH ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. RECENT MANIFESTATIONS OF THE THEME OF MILITARY SELF-RELIANCE, WHICH SEEMS TO BE GETTING SOMEWHAT GREATER EMPHASIS THAN PREVIOUSLY, INCLUDE PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO'S STATEMENTS ON THE ROC'S NUCLEAR POTENTIAL AND HIS DISCLAIMER OF THE NEED FOR U.S. TROOPS TO DEFEND TAIWAN (REFS A AND B) AND DEFENSE MINISTER KAO KUEI-YUAN'S STATEMENT DURING A LEGIS-LATIVE YUAN INTERPELLATION CONCERNING THE ROC'S ABILITY TO PRODUCE CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS (REF C). THE DISPLAY OF MILITARY ARMAMENTS AND TROOPS DURING THE DOUBLE TEN PARADE ALSO SERVED TO REINFORCE THE THEME OF MILITARY SELF-RELIANCE.

4. ANOTHER IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE CONDITIONING PROCESS IS THE "WEB OF RELATIONS" THEME WHICH, BY EMPHASIZING THE ROC'S EXTENSIVE UNOFFICIAL RELATIONS (COMMERCIAL, TRADE, CULTURAL, ETC.) WITH COUNTRIES WITH WHICH IT DOES NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, IS USED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ROC IS NOT ISOLATED INTERNATIONALLY DESPITE THE SERIOUS EROSION IN ITS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES (REF D). THE UNVOICED COROLLARY OF THIS THEME IS THAT FURTHER EROSION IN THE ROC'S DIPLOMATIC STANDING (ESPECIALLY THE END OF RECOGNITION BY THE U.S.) WOULD NOT NECESSARILY LEAD TO FURTHER ISOLATION OF THE ROC IN THOSE AREAS DEEMED IMPORTANT TO IT (E.G., TRADE AND COMMERCE).
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5. OFFICIAL AND MEDIA TREATMENT OF US/ROC RELATIONS STRESSES THAT THE ROC IS IMPORTANT TO THE U.S. BOTH AS A TRADING PARTNER AND AS AN ALLY (AS PART OF THE SO-CALLED NEW FORWARD LINE OF DEFENSE, WHICH ALSO INCLUDES THE ROK AND JAPAN). ALSO INCLUDED ARE GROC EFFORTS TO BRING AS MANY U.S. OFFICIALS (ESPECIALLY FROM THE CONGRESS) AS POSSIBLE TO THE ROC; THESE VISITS CAN THEN BE USED AS PALPABLE INDICATION THAT THE USG

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

(OR AT LEAST SOME OF ITS COMPONENTS) HAS A CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE ROC. ALL STATEMENTS BY USG OFFICIALS THAT COULD BE CONSTRUED AS SUPPORTING THE GROC OR OPPOSING THE PRC ARE GIVEN WIDE PUBLICITY IN THE PRESS, WHEREAS STATEMENTS FAVORABLE TO THE PRC ARE PLAYED DOWN OR AT TIMES COMPLETELY IGNORED.

6. THE CONCLUSION THAT THE READER IS INVITED TO DRAW IS THAT SINCE THE ROC CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT TO THE U.S., THE U.S., IN ITS PURSUIT OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH PEKING, WILL CONTINUE TO ACT RESPONSIBLY TO THE ROC (THE LINE MOST FREQUENTLY TAKEN BY THE SEMI-OFFICIAL CHUNG YANG JIH PAO). ANOTHER CONCLUSION PRESENTED IN MANY LOCAL NEWSPAPERS IS THAT BECAUSE THE ROC IS IMPORTANT TO THE U.S., U.S. RECOGNITION OF THE PRC AND CONSEQUENT DERECOGNITION OF THE ROC IS NOT A FOREGONE CONCLUSION; THIS OBVIOUSLY MAKES LITTLE CONTRIBUTION TO CONDITIONING.

7. THE CONDITIONING PROCESS, IT SHOULD BE NOTED, IS NOT INFREQUENTLY BEING UNDERMINED BY THE STRESS IN SPEECHES AND IN THE PRESS ON ANTI-PRC PROPAGANDA, INCLUDING REPORTS AND COMMENTARY ON UNREST ON THE MAINLAND, THE LOW STANDARD OF LIVING THERE, ALLEGED COMMUNIST DOUBLE-DEALING AND OFFICIAL STATEMENTS REGARDING RECOVERY OF THE MAINLAND. THIS ANTI-PRC THEME SUGGESTS THAT TIME IS NOT NECESSARILY ON THE SIDE OF THE PRC; AS CONDITIONS ON THE MAINLAND WORSEN, BOTH THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES WILL DISCOVER THE "TRUE FACE" OF TH CHINESE COMMUNIST LEADERS AND WILL TURN THEIR SUPPORT TO THE ROC.

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 06919 02 OF 02 230833Z

12
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TAIPEI 6919

8. AS IS APPARENT FROM THE ABOVE DESCRIPTION, THE CONDITIONING PROCESS IS HELPFUL TO THE EXTENT THAT IT PREPARES THE LOCAL POPULACE FOR THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE FUTURE AND ENCOURAGES THEM TO FACE THESE CONSTRUCTIVELY. ASSUMING THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE WILL EVENTUALLY BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED, IT WOULD ALSO BE PRUDENT FOR THE GROC GO THE FURTHER STEP AND DISCOURAGE THE PRESS FROM WHAT IS FOR THEM THE TEMPTING SUGGESTION THAT THE U.S. MAY NOT RECOGNIZE THE PRC AFTER ALL, IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE MORE CONSISTENT WITH THE CONDITIONING PROCESS TO PREPARE THE POPULACE FOR THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES TO THE ROC OF EVENTUAL COMPLETION OF THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS. IT ALSO APPEARS BOOTLESS TO CONTINUE THE PRESENT LEVEL OF LIP SERVICE TO RETURN TO THE MAINLAND (BUT OBVIOUSLY THE GROC IS NOT YET WILLING TO APPEAR TO HAVE DISCARDED THIS MAJOR SHIBBOLETH).

9. BECAUSE OF ITS SOMEWHAT AMORPHOUS NATURE, THE REAL EFFECTS OF THE CONDITIONING PROCESS ARE DIFFICULT TO MEASURE. WHILE IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE PREPARING TO SEEK ALTERNATIVES TO LIFE IN THE ROC (FILING OF IMMIGRANT
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PETITIONS OR ACQUISITION OF GREEN CARDS AND RETURN TO THE ROC) IS INCREASING, TO WHAT EXTENT THIS IS A NORMAL INCREASE AND WHETHER THE INCREASE WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER IN THE ABSENCE OF THE CONDITIONING PROCESS REMAIN UNCLEAR. WHAT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, IS THAT THERE IS NO PANIC HERE AT PRESENT, AND THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE COMING TO VIEW U.S. RECOGNITION OF THE PRC AS PROBABLY INEVITABLE. WHETHER OR NOT THE CONDITIONING PROCESS WILL CONTINUE TO BE EFFECTIVE IN PREPARING THE POPULACE OF TAIWAN TO WEATHER THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE FUTURE, ESPECIALLY AS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE ROC OF U.S. RECOGNITION OF THE PRC BECOMES MORE APPARENT, REMAINS UNCERTAIN AND IS A QUESTION WHICH THE EMBASSY WILL BE FOLLOWING CLOSELY IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.
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